2008-01421/

April 3, 1998
(Justice)

The following statement was issued today by Chris Decker, Minister of Justice. It was also read in the House of Assembly:

As the members of the House of Assembly are aware, the Select Committee constituted to inquire into and report upon the arming policy of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary, presented their findings to the House on Tuesday March 31, 1998. I said publicly at that time that government would deal with the report quickly.

I wish to inform the House today that government has examined the report presented by the Member for Topsail and his committee and that government will proceed with the implementation of the recommendations.

The Royal Newfoundland Constabulary is already an armed force. They have provided superior service to the people of this province for over 126 years. It has been found by the committee that the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary do require direct access to sidearms during their regular patrols and that the people of the province will be better served as a result.

This issue has been debated through public hearings and an in-depth study has been completed. We are satisfied that the time has come to amend the RNC Firearms Policy to allow members of the RNC to wear sidearms on a constant basis as necessitated based on the operational duties being performed.

As the Members of the House are aware, until now the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary has been the only police force in North America without direct access to their sidearms. It is time for this province to join with every other jurisdiction where professional and able police officers serve to protect the public.

1998 04 03 11:50 p.m.

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